

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1158

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Richard Edward "Eddy" Arnold of Brentwood.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Richard Edward "Eddy" Arnold; and

WHEREAS, throughout its illustrious history, Tennessee has been blessed with many exceptional citizens who have made untold contributions to the field of music; and

WHEREAS, a native of Chester County, Eddy Arnold was certainly one such outstanding Tennessean who became a permanent fixture of American music; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arnold's impact on American popular music is manifold and immeasurable, boasting the sale of a staggering eighty-five million records, thirty-seven pop chart-topping singles, numerous country chart-topping songs, and the eminent title as the single most popular country artist of all time; and

WHEREAS, the youngest of sixteen children of a large farming family, Eddy Arnold, also known by his nickname, "Tennessee Plowboy," became interested in music at a young age when his cousin lent him his first guitar; he learned to play with help from his mother and an itinerant musician and by carefully listening to the records of his lifelong influences, Gene Autry, Bing Crosby, and Jimmie Rodgers; and

WHEREAS, growing up during the Great Depression, Eddy Arnold quit school at the age of sixteen and began singing for money to supplement the family income at candy pulls, socials, and barbecues, before moving on to work on radio in Jackson, Memphis, and St. Louis; and

WHEREAS, in 1939, he joined Pee Wee King's Golden West Cowboys on WSM as a featured singer, in which position he worked on the Grand Ole Opry and the famous Camel Caravan tour; and

WHEREAS, in 1943, Mr. Arnold embarked on a solo career, broadcasting on WSM daytime shows and the Grand Ole Opry, the latter of which he became a member of with his band at the time, The Tennessee Plowboys; and

WHEREAS, under the management of Colonel Tom Parker, who would later manage Elvis Presley's career, Eddy Arnold recorded a four-song session at WSM's Studio B and paved the way for Nashville to earn the moniker, "Music City, U.S.A.," as this recording session was the first major-label recording in Nashville; among the four songs recorded was one that would become one of Mr. Arnold's signature songs, *Cattle Call*; and

WHEREAS, he garnered his first chart single with *Each Minute Seems A Million Years*, and followed it up with a string of highly successful hit songs, including *What Is Life Without Love*, *It's a Sin*, and *I'll Hold You In My Heart (Till I Can Hold You In My Arms)*, which stayed number one on the charts for an amazing twenty-one weeks, crossed over onto the pop charts, became the number one country single for the entire 1940s, and began Mr. Arnold's most impressive chart run; and

WHEREAS, for fifty-three consecutive weeks, Eddy Arnold held the number one country singles chart, and in 1948, there were only two weeks in which a song of his was not number one; he also outsold the entire pop division of the RCA Victor label; and

WHEREAS, after conquering the recording industry, Mr. Arnold set his sights on the television industry, creating an impact on the American pop audience through his memorable television shows and appearances; and

WHEREAS, a pioneering country television performer, Eddy Arnold brought country music out of the backwoods of the country and into the mainstream of the cities through his appearances on shows such as *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts*, *The Perry Como Show*, *The Tonight Show*, and his own *The Eddy Arnold Show*; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arnold furthered his widespread appeal by changing his sound from the more traditional country sounds of the steel guitar or fiddle to one that favored softer crossover sounds backed up with orchestrations, which resulted in his success skyrocketing during the fifties, sixties, and seventies; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arnold's illustrious career brought him numerous honors, awards, and accolades; in 1966, he performed at Carnegie Hall and was inducted into the Country Music

Hall of Fame at age forty-eight, becoming the youngest inductee to ever receive the honor. The following year, he received the Country Music Association's first Entertainer of the Year Award, and in 1984, he received the Academy of Country Music's Pioneer Award; and

WHEREAS, Eddy Arnold retired from performing on stage on May 16, 1999, but continued recording up to the release of his one-hundredth album, *After All This Time*, in 2005; The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences inducted his recording of *Make the World Go Away* into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1999 and honored him with the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arnold's widespread musical influence is unparalleled and his ability for producing exceptional music in this state is incomparable; in 1970, RCA awarded him for reaching the sixty million mark in lifetime record sales, a number that increased by more than twenty million at the time of his death, and marked his fiftieth year with the label by releasing his *Then and Now* album in 1993; and

WHEREAS, his many awards and accomplishments aside, Eddy Arnold was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arnold enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife of sixty-six years, Sally Gayhart Arnold, who preceded him in death on March 11, 2008; he was the proud father of JoAnn Pollard, who is married to Richard, and Richard Edward Arnold, Jr., who is married to Jeannie; and

WHEREAS, he was the doting grandfather of Michelle Pollard Johns, who is married to Nelson, and R. Shannon Pollard, who is married to Anissa, and the great-grandfather of Katie Elizabeth Pollard, Sophia Virginia Pollard, Rowan Shannon Pollard, and Ben Nolan Johns; he will be fondly remembered by his nephews, Jerry Arnold, Bob Ingle, and Frank Arnold, and will be sorely missed by his many wonderful relatives in Chester County; and

WHEREAS, Eddy Arnold leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being who, through his extraordinary musical talents, earned the universal respect of his peers and his fans; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Richard Edward "Eddy" Arnold, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our deepest sympathy and offer our heartfelt condolences to the family of Eddy Arnold.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.